



## **News Release**

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**Media Contact:**

Tania J Charette, MPH, CHES

Media Coordinator

(801) 538-6423

## **Utahns More Active Than the Average American**

(Salt Lake City, UT) – New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that 72% of Utah adults report they are physically active compared to 65% of adults nationally. Youth in Utah are also more likely to be active. The report showed that 20% of Utah high school students are physically active compared to 17% nationally.

State Indicator Reports for physical activity were released nationwide today describing activity levels among adults and children, as well as how conducive communities are to being active. This is the first time that policies and environmental comparisons were made across states, showing that Utah makes it easy for residents to stay fit. Specifically, the report cites higher access to parks, community centers, and sidewalks in neighborhoods as contributing factors to the difference.

“Utah is definitely ahead of the game when it comes to how active we are,” said Brett McIff, Physical Activity Coordinator for the Physical Activity, Nutrition, & Obesity Program (PANO) at the Utah Department of Health (UDOH). “Personal motivation can only take us so far when it comes to being more active. We need to have environments that help make activity be a part of everyday life.”

McIff says cities and towns can still do more to make neighborhoods places where people want to get outside. More sidewalks, sidewalks in good condition, adequate lighting, and places to go like parks and playgrounds can play an important role in helping Utahns of all ages be more physically active, and consequently less likely to suffer from chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and some forms of cancer.

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The activity data are released in conjunction with the National Physical Activity Plan, an approach that bridges several sectors, like transportation, public health, health care, and others in promoting regular physical activity for all Americans. “It doesn’t matter what shape you’re in,” says McIff. “Regular activity is about the closest thing to a silver bullet out there when it comes to improving health,”

The physical activity recommendations are: For adults, a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity (such as walking briskly) per week or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity (such as running or jogging.) Children need a minimum 60 minutes of activity per day. More information on the National Physical Activity Plan is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/>.

For more information on getting active, eating better and achieving a healthy weight, visit [www.health.utah.gov/obesity](http://www.health.utah.gov/obesity).

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*